

# AETC News Clips



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1, 2, & 3 Dec 01

Military

## Highway of Death's scrap to see new life

**By Sig Christenson**

Express-News Military Writer

**Web Posted :** 12/03/2001 12:00 AM

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait — Thousands of Iraqi tanks, armored personnel carriers, trucks and other vehicles destroyed a decade ago by U.S. forces along the "Highway of Death" have been sold as scrap.

A top U.S. military official in Kuwait, Army Lt. Col. Charles Heatherly, said the scorched, twisted hulks clustered along miles of desert sand had been sold to a Japanese firm, which will recycle the metal.

Heatherly said he had been told the wreckage was sold for about \$1.5 million, but he cautioned he had no first-hand knowledge of the agreement.

Kuwait Ministry of Information officials did not respond when asked about the deal.

"It's going to be a long, protracted process," said Heatherly, the American military and civil liaison with the Kuwait government. "But the goal is to complete this action within the next three years."

The scrap deal closes the final chapter on one of the most critical periods of the Persian Gulf War.

Attacks on Highway 6, the main north-south road from Kuwait to the Iraqi cities of Basra and Baghdad, ended the conflict and left stunning images of blasted vehicles littering the horizon.

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Now clear of the debris, Highway 6 got its nickname in the final hours of the war in 1991 when U.S.-led attacks riddled vehicles along the road amid a chaotic Iraqi retreat.

While it's thought that fewer than 1,000 Iraqis were killed, the carnage left in the wake of the attacks helped prompt a quick end to the war.

Today, the vehicles shot up along the highway are stored at sites in and immediately outside of Kuwait City, the capital of this tiny, oil-rich emirate.

Fenced off by tall sand berms that run for miles, the decaying tanks, anti-aircraft pieces, armored personnel carriers, troop trucks, buses and civilian vehicles are stacked together in several lots along a two-lane road just outside a Kuwaiti air base.

Tanks painted desert brown sit atop each other by the dozens in one lot far off the highway, many in pieces. The remains of antiquated anti-aircraft guns, their long, thin barrels pointed skyward, are kept in a lot closer to the road.

A short walk away is yet another lot filled with ruined equipment and troop trucks, their leather tarps gone.

The wreckage outside Kuwait City may remain part of the desert landscape for some time.

Heatherly said the Japanese firm will recycle "clean" junked vehicles now stored in Kuwait City. The company later will recycle vehicles that might be contaminated by petroleum pollutants and depleted uranium.

Depleted uranium is a heavy, hard metal that penetrates armor. It's primarily used in anti-tank shells and has fueled controversy in recent years.

However, studies done on shells used in Operation Allied Force, the U.S.-led air war over Yugoslavia in 1999, show no adverse health problems among veterans or civilians, said Lt. Col. Vic Warzinski, a Pentagon spokesman.



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Though people are warned to stay away from the wreckage, both Heatherly and Maj. David Farlow, a Fort Hood spokesman accompanying media to Kuwait, said there is little risk of radiation poisoning from the junk.

"The amount is minimal, but it is still there," Farlow said.

Heatherly said the junked vehicles show "that we have an awesome military might."

Pictures of the battle scene, in turn, put a big exclamation point on the most lopsided victory in American history.

"I think it was a key image, and it gave the sense of a hapless and helpless Iraqi army," said Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution.

"If you had continued to beat up on it," he said of the Iraqi force, "it would have made some people's stomachs churn."

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# Benavidez heroism remembered

## Family, friends pay tribute to Vietnam vet

By CARMINA DANINI  
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

As they have each year since his death on Nov. 29, 1998, family and friends of Medal of Honor hero Roy P. Benavidez gathered at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in tribute.

There were prayers Saturday, posting of the colors and placement of red, white and blue flowers at Benavidez's grave, located next to that of U.S. Congressman Frank Tejeda Jr., D-San Antonio, who died in 1997.

Mostly, there were remembrances of the retired master sergeant whose heroism in Vietnam is legendary.

"Roy was one of a kind. He was the epitome of what every American should be," said Benito V. Guerrero, a retired Army sergeant major and a friend of Benavidez's for 40 years.

Benavidez, a native of the South Texas town of Lindenau, saved eight wounded members



BAHRAM MARK SOBHANI/STAFF  
Family and friends of Roy P. Benavidez, including his widow, Hilaria (second from right), stand at his grave during Saturday's service.

of a special forces reconnaissance team awaiting helicopter evacuation during a May 2, 1968, firefight with North Vietnamese forces in Cambodia.

Though he was stabbed with bayonets and shot, the special forces soldier — he was a staff sergeant at the time — single-handedly repelled the enemy.

Gravely wounded, Benavidez avoided being given up for dead when he spat at a doctor. He was awarded the Distin-

guished Service Cross by Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of the U.S. forces in Vietnam.

The award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor that Benavidez received from President Reagan in a 1981 ceremony at the White House.

Guerrero told about 50 people assembled under a large live oak tree that since Benavidez's death in a San Antonio hospital on Nov. 29, 1998, he has been

awarded additional honors, posthumously.

A new elementary school near Palo Alto Road set to open next year will bear Benavidez's name, Guerrero said.

In May, Gov. Rick Perry presented the Texas Legislative Medal of Honor to Benavidez's family. It was the first given to a Hispanic.

In July, the Navy christened the USNS Roy P. Benavidez, a resupply ship that will carry troops, vehicles and weapons during war.

"His family presented a Bible to be carried on the ship," Guerrero said.

Afterward, Imelda de Leon, a high school algebra and economics teacher, said Americans should never forget soldiers like Benavidez.

"How can we forget men like him who fought for us, who went to war to make sure we are free?" said de Leon, who was accompanied to the memorial service by her husband, Richard, a 31-year Air Force veteran who was wounded during the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam. "We should always pay tribute."

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# Note from hometown shows serviceman that someone cares



FURGERSON

## GUEST COLUMNIST

The recent events in New York and Washington have generated a revival of patriotism across our country. Seeing our nation's flag flying in yards, on cars and displayed from buildings just makes me feel good all over.

Again and again, I've heard people ask, "What can I do? I want to do something meaningful. I want to make a difference."

Retired veterans have contacted their branch of the service to see if there is a way they can volunteer. They have asked, "Are my skills needed? Can I make a contribution?"

I think there is a way each of us can do something significant. Let me share a very personal story with you.

It was November 1969. I was a pilot stationed at Da Nang, Vietnam. My wife and baby were a long way from me. It was particularly bloody time in the war. Former friends were turning their backs on my wife and me. Vietnam was not a popular war.

Thanksgiving was a black day. Our goal was to get hot turkey to every Marine in the field. It was almost dark, and we had accomplished the mission when the First Marines came under attack. It was bloody. We scrambled to support those in contact.

After midnight, I secured my aircraft in the bunker and was walking back to the Ready Room. It was a

long, lonesome walk. I was discouraged. Why was I there? Who cared? Did it really make a difference? Why were so many of my friends hurting and dying? Where was my church?

I got to the Ready Room and my mailbox. There were two letters. One I recognized from my wife. The other was a plain envelope.

Immediately, I read my wife's letter. Quietly, I hurt for her. Then I opened the other envelope.

It contained a bulletin from my church on Veteran's Day. Across the top was scribbled, "Jimmy, thought about you today. Mable." I cannot tell you for sure who Mable was. I think she was my Sunday School teacher when I was in elementary school.

I went to the bunker, sat on top of it and read every word in that bulletin. In my mind, I sang the hymns, saw the old deacon pray and read the Scripture the pastor preached from. I reviewed the week's activities.

I was really homesick, but in those early morning hours, in my mind, I went home.

I realized why I was a U.S. Marine, why I was in Vietnam. And I treasured my country and the freedoms we enjoy. I wanted people in Southeast Asia to enjoy these same freedoms. In my own way, I worshipped God that day in the bunker. I recommitted myself.

The time Mable took to send me a

church bulletin really affected this Marine. It made a difference. I knew someone cared. It changed my attitude. All it takes is a short note.

The holidays are on us. Let's not forget our troops and their families. Think how much it would mean to our servicemen and servicewomen overseas to receive church bulletins and encouraging notes from friends, relatives or fellow church members at home.

Just seeing a familiar return address on the envelope will lift their spirits.

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*Jim Furgerson, Lt. Col. USMC Retired, is executive director of Texas Baptist Men, an arm of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.*



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# Talks on base closings stall; veto fight looms

## Commission plan irks reps

BY HELEN DEWAR  
WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Congressional negotiators have hit an impasse over the Pentagon's proposal for a new round of military base closings, delaying action on critical defense legislation and raising the possibility of a veto fight with the Bush administration.

At issue is a recommendation to create a commission — as Congress did in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 — to compile a list of bases to be closed or realigned, starting in 2003.

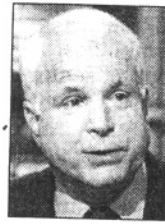
As in the earlier cases, the president and Congress could accept or reject the list but not change it.

This all-or-nothing approach has made it easier to win approval for base closings. But they remain highly sensitive because of community pressure on lawmakers, especially House members, who face voters every two years.

The Senate narrowly approved the commission proposal as part of its version of the fiscal 2002 defense authorization bill, which sets the policy framework for the defense spending bill that is also working its way through Congress.

However, the House refused to include the proposal in its version of the legislation.

Although the Senate vote



SEN. JOHN MCCAIN  
R-Ariz.

*"Both sides are dug in. . . . There has been an impasse for some time."*

came after Sept. 11, the attacks hardened resistance to the idea in the House, said Rep. Jim Saxton, R-N.J., chairman of the House subcommittee on military installations.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has pushed hard for the proposal and, in a letter last month, said he would "join other senior advisers to the president in recommending that he veto" the legislation if it didn't include the base-closing authority.

Since the two houses began trying to reconcile their bills, negotiators have stuck by their earlier positions on the base-closing issue while resolving most other issues that had been in dispute.

"Both sides are dug in. . . there has been an impasse for some time," said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a member of the Senate negotiating team and a strong advocate of more base closings.

"All the debate so far has been BRAC (Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission) or no BRAC," Saxton

said.

In an attempt to break the deadlock, several sources said, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich., plans to offer a possible compromise. Although they said they did not know details, sources said the proposal may offer the best chance for a middle-ground solution.

"It is a unique compromise worthy of consideration," said Sen. John Warner, R-Va., ranking Republican on the armed services panel.

Some compromises that have been floated recently include a delay in implementation of the closings, a base-by-base study before a commission is created and a procedure under which some bases would be put off-limits for closure, said sources close to the talks.

Without a genuine compromise, McCain suggested Congress may have no choice but to approve the legislation without any BRAC provisions and leave it to President Bush to sign or veto the measure.

The defense appropriations bill is already under a veto threat if Democrats succeed in adding homeland security funds that exceed budget limits and the \$40 billion approved by Congress after the September attacks.

The administration has estimated it has a surplus base capacity of 23 percent and believes it could save \$3 billion a year by eliminating it. It figures \$14.5 billion has been saved with the closing or realignment of bases since 1988.



# Keepers of the flame

San Antonio residents will carry the Olympic torch.

By ADITI KINKHABWALA  
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

It's supposed to take 65 days, traveling more than 13,500 miles in 46 states, while passing through 11,500 pairs of hands.

The Olympic torch relay begins Tuesday in Atlanta, and swings through San Antonio a week later for

Day 8 of the passing of the flame.

That fire should remain burning until Feb. 8, when Salt Lake City's Olympic Cauldron is lighted and the Winter Games commence.

As long as no one drops the torch, "I'm not going to make any mistakes," said David Robinson, San Antonio Spur and the city's third torch-bearer. Giving way to a smile, he con-

tinued, "Besides, I only have to go a block."

With 91 torchbearers sharing the Alamo City route, no one has much more than a block or two to carry the 3-foot torch. But that certainly doesn't lessen the experience, even for a three-time Olympian like Robinson.

"This is a pretty big honor," he said, remembering Muhammad Ali's lighting of the Atlanta cauldron in 1996. "It's a way to be a part of the Olympics. I feel like an alumni and I take pride in that."

In a year when the Olympic movement aimed to find "inspiring people" to carry the flame, the majority of torchbearers represent some group such as former Olympians or foster parents.

Breast cancer survivor Babs Kiley, who was nominated by the garrison at Fort Sam Houston, said she will be running for three sets of people.

"I'll be representing Fort Sam, I'll be representing cancer patients and

I'll be doing this for all the military spouses," said Kiley, whose husband is Maj. Gen. Kevin Kiley, the post's commanding officer. "I hope people in San Antonio will come out and see the torch. It stands for what America stands for: everyone pulling together to excel."

Robinson also felt that as patriotism runs high, the passing of the flame can excite all America "as a nation."

The Naval Academy graduate will kick off the day's celebration at 6:30 a.m. Dec. 11, when the torch is scheduled to arrive by train at Sunset Station. After he speaks, he will be whisked off to the front of Carver Academy, the charter school he helped build, for his segment of the relay.

Kiley has been jogging to prepare for her trek.

"They gave me the only hill at Fort Sam," she said. "I'm going to have to

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Babs Kiley jogs with her husband, Maj. Gen. Kevin Kiley, on a Fort Sam Houston sidewalk on Saturday. Babs Kiley is among 91 runners, including San Anto-

nio Spur David Robinson, who will carry the Olympic torch on its San Antonio route on Dec. 11. The torch also will get a ride on a river barge.

BAHRAM MARK SOBHAM/STAFF



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# Runners await Olympic torch

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do some slow, survival shuffle of a jog."

Kiley's leg will end at the fort's Quadrangle, where the torch will rest for a 15-minute ceremony. It then wraps back up Broadway, past Incarnate Word and Trinity universities, and then back downtown to La Villita.

The Salt Lake organizing committee hasn't released the names of all the San Antonio torchbearers.

The torch is expected to travel via car, plane, train, ship, dog sled, skier, snowmobile and a variety of other modes during its national trek. In San Antonio, the torch will get a ride on a river barge.

From the barge, the final runner will bring the torch to Alamo Plaza and a celebration of music and dancing. The party on the plaza begins at 10 a.m., with the flame expected to complete its San Antonio course at 11:30 a.m. From there, the torch will head to Austin.

Kiley, who admitted she's not as confident as Robinson that she'll not trip while carrying the torch, said she's found the perfect remedy to make sure she helps keep the torch on track.

"I'm going to run around my house with a sledgehammer," she said, laughing. "That should be good practice."

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## Torchbearers

These San Antonio-area residents are committed to carry the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic flame around the Alamo City on Dec. 11. The full field of 91 participants will be announced later this week by torch run organizers.

Hal Adams ■ Andrew Almazan ■ Cynthia Antilley ■ Dr. Carmelito Arkangel Jr. ■ Jason Baker ■ Stephanie Bowling ■ Robert Bush ■ Sam Champion ■ Dr. Charles Coltman ■ Robert Cormier ■ Debra Cukjati ■ Tiffany D'Mello ■ Delton A. Dupart II ■ Jose Espinosa ■ Rolando Espinosa ■ Mike Gamber ■ Dr. Joyce Gelfond ■ Mary Lou Gonzalez ■ Paulette Goodman ■ Bill Greehey ■ Kyle Guffy ■ Edward Hammel ■ William Harson ■ Scott Hayes ■ Stacey Johnson ■ Kathryn Keck ■ Babs Kiley ■ Clyde Lehman ■ Pete Lipscomb ■ Dr. Deborah Lundblade ■ Cynthia Lyons ■ Mollie Marsh ■ James E. McCann IV ■ James E. McCann V ■ Scott McClelland ■ Dr. Tom McMurray ■ Stephan Motz ■ Rebecca Neff ■ Dr. Federico Ng ■ Dr. David Nielson ■ Vanessa Olmo ■ Julie O'Toole ■ Gary G. Ploetz ■ Gaylord Reaves ■ Michael Richards ■ Julie Roberson ■ David Robinson ■ Dr. Ricardo Romo ■ Larry Roser ■ Leslie Sapadin ■ Rebecca Shaeffer ■ Mary Anne Sinclair ■ Jason Smith ■ Larry Don Thurmond ■ Ruben Villafranca ■ Kirby Whitehead

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# Wild Game Dinner planned Saturday

ALEJANDRA VALDEZ

Staff Writer

The Chamber of Commerce Special Projects Committee is sponsoring the 12th Annual Wild Game Dinner this Saturday at the Del Rio Civic Center at 6:30 p.m.

Among the wild and exotic meats that will be served are whitetail deer, feral hog, elk, fish, quail and turkey.

Various preparation styles will include guisado, fried venison, fried turkey, grilled quail and the General's chili. Along with the meat portions, potato salad, beans and hominy will be served.

The exotic and wild game were donated to the dinner by Texas Antlers - Johnny Allen, Sycamore Creek Ranch, Bill Love Ranch, Indian Head Ranch, George Hargrove-Union Slaughter, Charlie Rumfield and Lake Amistad Guide Service.

During the dinner, raffle drawings will be held for 57 firearms totaling \$29,000 in value. Among the pricier and coveted firearms are a Ruger O/U-12, valued at \$1,399; two Browning A-bolt Med. Boss., each valued at \$810; a Ruger K77RMKII LAM-223 valued at \$765 and a Sako TK3 25.06 valued at \$750.

Raffle tickets are on sale for a dollar each and winners need not be present to win.

This year, raffle money will also be used to make a contribution to the National Disaster Relief Fund, through the American Red Cross.

One of the Chamber of Commerce's biggest fund raisers of the year, the Wild Game Dinner helps fund many of the other activities the Chamber of Commerce is involved in throughout the year.

Last year's Wild Game Dinner had 1,500 tickets sold before the event took place, up from 1999's 1,200 tickets.

The 2000 dinner was described as a great success by Michaelanna Hunter, Del Rio Chamber of Commerce president. This event is one that many Del Rioans and Winter Texans look forward to every year. 1,800 diners are expected this year.

This year's diners will get a chance to visit with each other and to sample food while listening for the winning names and numbers for the raffles.

Other raffle prizes will include two \$500 gift certificates, a diamond necklace from Roberts Jewelers, clocks, watches and a guided hunting tour from Mack Altizer and a

guided fishing trip from Ray Hanselman of Reel-N-Ray.

Linda Henderson, chamber manager, explained that this year a special room will be set up for special drawings.

If there is one item you are interested in winning, for example the tours or the diamond necklace, there will be a collection plate for raffle tickets going just for that item, and not anything else.

Raffle ticket holders have this option, but may choose to keep their tickets in the drawing for all items. Henderson said this is done so an outdoorsman won't walk away with say, a clock.

Dinners will be prepared for an expected 1,800 people, beginning at 2 p.m., when the Special Projects Committee will begin cooking in BBQ pits outside the civic center.

"It's a collection of guys from around town and the base that like to cook. This year, Col. Rosborg will help out,

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LAUGHLIN AFB, TX

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too," said Henderson of the Laughlin Air Force Base 47th Flying Training Wing Commander.

Tickets for the Del Rio Chamber of Commerce Wild Game Dinner are \$15 per diner and include dinner and a beverage.

Door prizes will be given away to dinner ticket holders, these winners must be present to collect prizes. Other raffle drawing winners need not be present to win.

Dinner and raffle tickets may be purchased at Amistad Propane, 3821 Hwy 90 W; Arc Rite Welding and Truck Accessories, 5555 Hwy 90 W; Humphrey's Gun Shop, 124 E. Garfield; Railway Feeds, 101 N. Main St.; In and Out Ten-Minute Oil Change, 101 E. Gibbs St.; T.J. Moore Lumber Yard, located at #1 Moore St.; The Del Rio Chamber of Commerce office at 1915 Ave. F or any Chamber of Commerce Special Projects Committee member. At Laughlin Air Force Base, tickets may be purchased at LAFB Bldg. 204, X5964 from Richard Pratt, LCSAM.

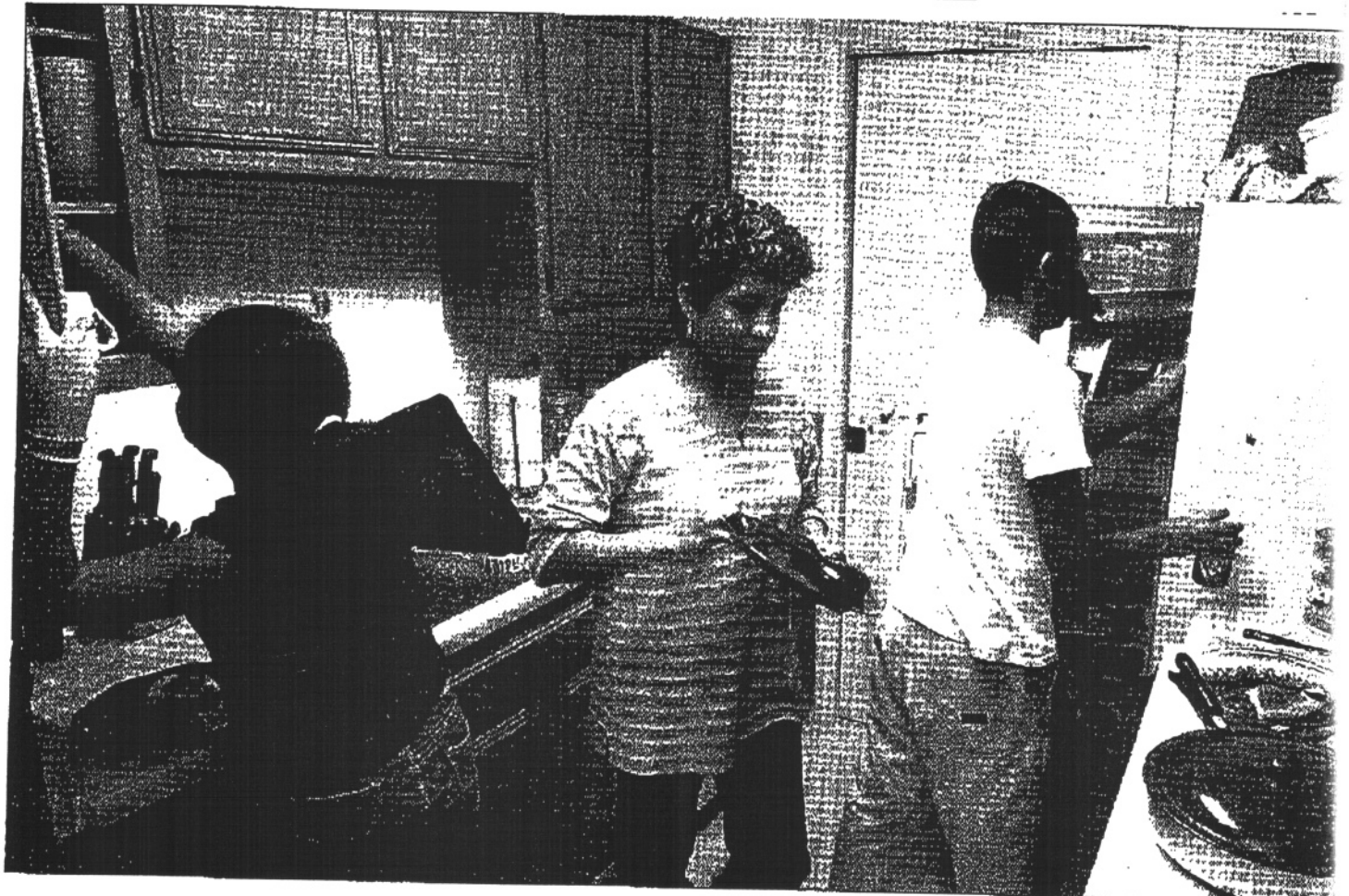
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LAUGHLIN AFB, TX  
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S-I PHOTO BY LAKHIIH KENNEDY

Cristina (center) and her children crowd the kitchen preparing to have dinner together as close to normal as they can. Cristina's husband has been deployed on a military assignment during the war against terrorism.

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# FAMILIES: Those who stay home must battle loneliness

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Eight months after they met, she said, they married at the Celebration Bridge. "We were talking about it one day. I was sitting outside and he walked up and tried to make (the proposal) all sweet, and I said, 'Put the ring on my finger, I don't have time for this!' And he did."

Staff Sgts. Vanessa, 31 and Oscar, 27, know separation: Oscar had to stay in Germany when Vanessa was transferred to Texas after they married. In their three years of marriage, they've been apart a year and a half.

But war deployment hits you harder, Vanessa said. Oscar was deployed because another member of his security team at Goodfellow could not go; after three quick days of errands, Vanessa followed him to the tarmac to a waiting C-130.

"I was hoping every time he walked that way or when he was getting on the plane, that he would actually come back off it — like one of those commercials where you're running toward each other," Vanessa said. "I wanted that so bad. But it took off."

Vanessa has Oscar's wedding ring on a chain around her neck, she was afraid he'd lose it. The phone rang in mid-interview — it was Oscar using one of his "morale calls."

"Hi, honey!" a surprised Vanessa said, blushing furiously. She lowered her voice to a cooing whisper, made quick conversation of stamps, bills, letters and exchanged multi-

ple "I love yous."

Afterwards Vanessa said that's the hardest part — "wanting to kiss him or hold him and having a phone between you, and the whole world between you."

The youngest member of Capt. Todd's Air Force family is Conrad, a 8-year-old who doesn't like mashed potatoes but loves Buzz Lightyear. While mom, Maj. Jill, is deployed with other intelligence officers in Enduring Freedom, Conrad is turning the captain into a full time "Mr. Mom."

"Socks continue to be a problem," Todd said, grinning about the 6 a.m. routine Conrad and he maintain in order to get to the base by 8:30. "Someone had a book and it said that to practice for it you should get an octopus and a mesh bag and try to get all the tentacles in."

When Mom deployed in early October, she had four days' advance warning. Paperwork, uniforms and mind-numbing issues like assigning power-of-attorney aside, she had to prepare Conrad.

"She explained why we're going — in his terms, of course," Todd said. "He understood, and his big thing was that when he got a little bigger he wanted to go fight the bad guy, too. So we told him he had to keep eating all his food and getting his sleep, because that's when you grow."

Todd met Jill 10 years ago here at the "Goodfellow Chapel of Love," as he referred to the base because of the multiple marriages it has

produced. They got married in Korea and are used to separation when duty calls — but this is Jill's first holiday away from her son. There's a possibility that Todd, also an intelligence officer, will be deployed, too, in which case Conrad's grandparents will step in.

They're lucky, though. Jill was deployed to a domestic location, so she calls home every other night.

"Conrad's at the age now where he likes to talk on the phone," Todd said. "He takes the phone away (and) he'll talk about whatever he did that day or what toy he wants because he knows Christmas is coming."

Keeping Conrad happy requires a lot of attention, and it might get harder when Christmas comes and Mom still isn't there.

For now, when Todd needs time to himself, he'll put on Conrad's favorite videos. If Mom was around, "he probably wouldn't watch as much TV, but that's when I'll get my uniform ready for the next day, do bills or clean the kitchen," he said.

A 7 a.m. dark rain made blurry red haloes around flashing lights as small children dashed to a waiting school bus.

Sixth-grader Sabrina missed the bus that day as her siblings Joe and Selfia, both 14, and mom Cristina and she sat in their living room to proudly talk about stepdad Michael, a security forces member who deployed in September.

Michael and Cristina mar-

ried two years ago after he saw her while manning a security gate at Goodfellow. Cristina, a cosmetologist, was on base with a friend, and Michael was quick to get her phone number.

When he got his orders, "I was terrified," Cristina said. "If they can hit here, they can hit anywhere."

The military housing into which they moved in June was immaculate.

Thanksgiving tablecloths and placemats decorated the kitchen table. Joe has his own room, which is barely decorated except for school pictures of his sisters stuck into his dresser mirror.

Selfia and Sabrina share a room, and it was full of stuffed animals, perfumes and Selfia's homecoming mum, hung by her pillow.

The family is on a tight budget because Cristina is taking time off from work to get her GED and Michael has only been in the military three years.

The grocery budget for the family of five is \$230 a month. "No restaurants!" Cristina said.

But all three kids want to follow in Michael's footsteps, Joe is eyeing either the Air Force or Marines because he wants to fly. Selfia plans to join the Navy ROTC at school next year when she's old enough.

When given the opportunity to say something in print directly to her husband, Cristina paused, then said: "Just that we've been praying for him and everybody else, and that we can't wait for him to come home."

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# I nose left behind



5-T PHOTO BY CAMERON VABOROUGH  
With his wife deployed, Capt. Todd (right) has sole responsibility for their 3-year-old son, Conrad. The pair, seen here playing around during dinner, was among approximately 12 families affected by recent deployments from Goodfellow Air Force Base.

## GAFB families prepare for lonely holidays as loved ones are deployed

By IARA COPP  
Scripts Howard News Service

When 20-year-old newlywed Kim describes her husband Joseph, the tiny redheaded with silvery lip-gloss raises her right arm high and looks up to blue eyes that aren't there.

"He's about this tall," she said, stretching in her fatigues and combat boots. "I love his ears."

Both Kim and Joseph, 21, are air-men first class who met at Goodfellow Air Force Base. A 3 a.m. phone call in the days after Sept. 11 deployed security forces, including Joseph, to an undisclosed location. Another group deployed in early November and more will go in the weeks ahead.

Now Kim, like thousands of spouses and their children across the nation, faces the holidays with some loneliness.

"The person who deploys has the easy part," said Col. Harry Lehoucq, who celebrated early FACES (Families Apart - an Enclave Separation) Thanksgiving dinner last week with some of those husbands, wives and their kids. "It's the person who stays behind who has the hardest job."

Goodfellow men and women whose spouses are deployed agreed to talk about what life is like for them now that the nation is at war. (For security reasons, the families' last names and deployment locations could not be used.)

For Kim, when the call for Joseph came, "I didn't want him to go at all," she said. "All I could think was, 'What am I supposed to do? I knew he was going to be gone for Hal- loween, Thanksgiving, our first-year anniversary, Christmas, his birth- day, New Year's... I just knew all this horrible stuff was going to come and I didn't know what I was going to do without him.'"

Kim, the second-oldest of six kids, decided to join the Air Force before she finished high school in Buffalo, N.Y. She attended weekly meetings until graduation, then shipped off for basic training to Texas. Joseph, their dog

Goldie and Kim live in an apart- ment decorated in maroon and blue, the couple's favorite colors. She gets frequent phone calls from Joseph, who asks how many bills we have (and) says "Don't spend it all," Kim said. Financially, she said, they're doing well.

"I know enough that all the bills get paid first, and whatever left is spending money," she said. "It's a lot easier with two, because both of us make about \$800 every two weeks -- \$1,600 together -- so we pay our bills. He likes video games so he buys them, and I go to the mall, shopping."

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# FACES program eases problems arising in family member's absence

By TARA COPP  
Scripps Howard News Service

Winter had set in on Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma, and Kristi Hamrick, then a 22-year-old whose husband had been shipped off for two months, was cold.

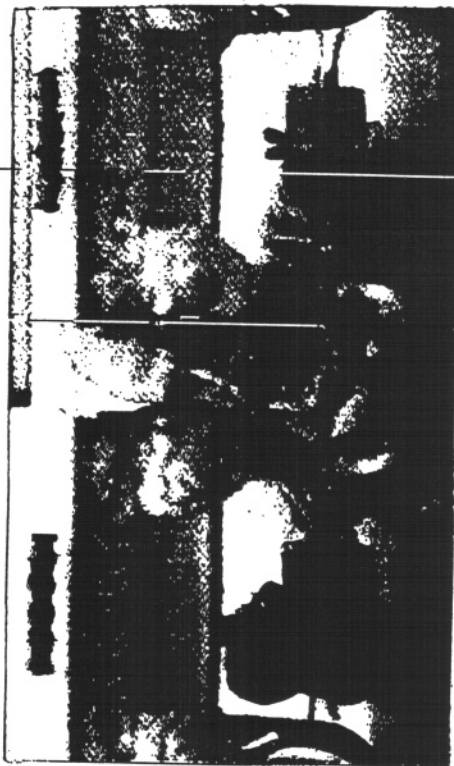
"And I didn't know how to light the pilot light," she said. "So I called the gas company, and the guy was really nice, but he said 'Honey, every little old lady in Oklahoma City wants their pilot light lit tonight. You're 22 — get over it, and learn how to do it.'"

"I looked at it, and I was just

afraid," Hamrick said. "So I let Hamlet my Great Dane sleep in the bed with me while it got cold, because I didn't know what else to do."

Hamrick eventually figured out the pilot light, and other household things she hadn't wrestled before, like the water heater and opening and shutting the fireplace flue. Now she's part of Goodfellow's FACES program — Families Apart Can Endure Separation, which, as part of the base's Family Support Center, steps in when a parent deploys.

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ST PHOTO BY CAMERON YARBROUGH  
Tech Sgt. Dave Thompson lights gas heaters underneath pans of food during a Thanksgiving meal sponsored last week by family support at Goodfellow Air Force Base.

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## FACES: Center programs help when need arises

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When a family car breaks down, or when a formerly employed civilian is called into reserve duty and is facing money problems, or a parent wants free child care to get some time away, the military's Family Support Center has programs in place now to help, said TSgt. Deanna Markovitch, the base's family readiness officer.

Upon deployment, the airmen each got \$20- and \$10- phone cards from the center, and each family got a gift certificate for a free oil change and 10-point car inspection so that the member could leave more confident that the family car was in good shape.

The programs, which are evolving in all the armed forces, are "a result of senior leadership," said MSgt. Charles Harris, the center's superintendent.

"They've recognized the importance that having happy families has on the members, of whether or not they can do their job well and safely, and then at the end of the four or six years enlistment, of whether they want to stay in."

The center handles less tangible aspects of deployment as well, including addressing what they say are the seven emotional stages a family goes through when a parent leaves: anticipation of loss, detachment and withdrawal, emotional disorganization, recovery and stabilization, anticipa-

tion of homecoming, renegotiation of the marriage contract, and reintegration and stabilization.

"As just an example, as the time for the member to leave draws near, there's a heightened flurry of activity, you've got a million things to do," Harris said. "As that time grows closer and closer, there's a period of listlessness; that we're not going to get everything done, that it doesn't matter any way. You just kind of lose your energy just before it's time for the military member to leave."

"Once they're gone, that's when we deal with the families a lot more."

Harris said. "And the family, the spouse especially who's left behind, often feels kind of happy, kind of a sense of relief that the member is gone. And that's a very confusing emotion but it is common."

Last Thursday, the center and FACES helped throw a pre-Thanksgiving dinner for the spouses and families of those deployed or who will deploy, and for the base's single parents. Hamrick said that sort of interaction is a big part of getting through separation.

"FACES is real important for those kinds of things, so we meet each other, so we can help each other or learn not to be embarrassed to ask for help," she said. "That's exactly why I let the dog sleep with me, because I was too embarrassed to say, 'I don't know how to light my own pilot light.'"